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SERMON

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OF

MISS MARY C. GREENLEAF.

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A

SERMON

DELIVERED IN THE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEWBURYPORT,

AUGUST 23, 1857;

COMMEMORATIVE OF THE CHARACTER OF

MISS MARY C. GREENLEAF,

LATE A MISSIONARY TEACHER AT WAPANUCKA,
IN THE CHICKASAW NATION.

BY ASHBEL G. VERMILYE,
MINISTER OF THE SAID CHURCH.

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SERMON.

MATTHEW 26 : 13. "THERE SHALL ALSO THIS, THAT THIS WOMAN HATH DONE, BE TOLD FOR A MEMORIAL OF HER."

We all wish to leave some record on the sands of time ; and whether consciously or otherwise, all are raising memorials of themselves. No one is so humble, as not to be remembered and spoken of for a short time at least, and in a circle more or less extended. The grass retains the impress of the passing foot; the disturbed waters return not at once to rest, where even a stone has casually fallen ; and a hillock remains over the grave of the lowliest, and distinguishes it for awhile from the common earth around. And so in the places that once knew them, traces will linger, and be more or less distinct, of the mortal career of every man.

But whilst the desire to which I alluded is the common passion, implanted for wise purposes; whilst it serves to awaken our dormant powers, and invigorate and direct our energies ; and whilst none pass at once to oblivion ; how few outlast the yearly cycle, or perform deeds that deserve to be remembered : that will continue, and be fruitful of good, and yield harvests, to those who come after. They who most ambitiously seek posthumous or present renown, are very apt to be disappointed; because they seek it not from right motives, nor in right ways,

nor for right ends. Their aims are selfish, and the praise rather than the good of men and the glory of God, is their main object. Mankind soon detect the latent motive, and place them low down on the roll of true worth; they pass their inglorious days, and speedily the obliterating wave blots out their memory.

Our text, on the contrary, furnishes a beautiful instance of one who, commended while living by lips divine, has also obtained an imperishable record — who certainly did not seek nor expect it — yet whose simple act, prompted by love and reverence for the Saviour, remains a monument more honorable and more durable than sculptured marble or the blazon of heraldry. A brief exposition of the scripture incident, will fitly preface the subject of this discourse.

"As Jesus sat at meat in the house of Simon the leper (the narrative reads,) there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head." The act was one which nothing in the condition of its object required, even of the tenderest sympathy. Engaged at the social meal, and conversing as we converse, though it may be on diviner themes, his sacred head felt no pulsations of corroding care nor aches of bodily infirmity; and though soon to be wounded, the "crown of thorns" had not yet been "platted." To some even of our Lord's disciples, her generous offering seemed a "waste;" as the unreserved devotion to which affection prompts, no doubt will usually appear to the calculating and colder-hearted. "They had indignation," we are told, "saying, to what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor." We need not here question their motives, nor that to appearances, such a use of it would have been more judicious, more wise in her. But love does not, in general, pause to consider the maxims of wisdom; Christian love is not a calculating sentiment or principle; and we are not to judge its modes of exhibiting itself, by

the mathematical lines of worldly prudence. This woman, taking counsel of none but her own loving heart, sought only how she might express the deep affection and high reverence she felt for Christ. There was her "alabaster box." It was her most valuable possession. True, the ointment is very precious and expensive. But when the eye of affection has selected its object — when Christian affection has caught sight of that polar star with whom none other in the canopy can be compared; when the heart of a true woman—that treasure in itself so precious, so self-denying for the objects of its regard, which was the best possession of man even in Paradise—has yielded to the love of Jesus; what gift will be thought too costly to bestow, what sacrifice too great to attest its love? Impelled by such feelings then, she had come so soon as she heard of his presence in Bethany, to pour it out as a free libation upon the Saviour's head; who had been to her, since the moment of conversion and hope, her Lord, her life; and to whom his grace had bound her by ties which not death itself could sever. She might have given it to the poor — and who that knows the ways of ardent piety, can doubt her kindness to the poor — but them, she would have always with her; the Saviour not always. Them she could assist as occasion required; but he who had claims upon her far greater than theirs, would soon be gone from Bethany. Nor was her benevolence of that kind so common, with which avarice and lukewarmness content themselves — that refuses every present demand upon it, in favor of some future and more approved object; but she did "what she could," did it as opportunity offered, and her piety prompted. And who now so bold as to impugn her act, though those disciples did; and what disciple—who has felt in any proper degree the impulse of Christian sentiment, or who regards with becoming reverence the Saviour's verdict—will be disposed to censure the costly gift, should it be life itself, which sometimes in these days also, piety lays upon the altar — when that offering is

made, evidently not for display, not thereby to merit salvation, but from love to Jesus ?

Blessed henceforth among women, was this Mary ! She had done "what she could." And though it was not much, perhaps, compared with the resources and means of others, yet for her it was much — and more, as the providence of God ordered it to her praise, than she could by possibility have anticipated ; she had wrought a good, a well-timed work upon him, preparatory and significant of his burial. And this her act of affection was more approved by the Master than sounding charities, than conspicuous service where the heart is wanting, or than holocausts and offerings. She hath gained thereby, without effort, what ambition often strives in vain to acquire, an enduring memorial. The Saviour himself has spoken her eulogium, and it will stand while the world shall last ; "wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."

The incident whose points I have thus imperfectly sketched, and especially the text, have struck me as peculiarly appropriate to my present purpose ; which is to pay a tribute of affection to the memory of another Mary, who formerly went in and out among you in the acts of a consistent Christian life — but of whom we have recently heard, that she has passed away from earth forever. I can rear no monument over her distant grave to show my appreciation of this excellent woman. But it is my greater privilege to speak of her life, an impressive lesson to those who survive. She, also, hath her memorial; her pious zeal and devotion to the cause of Christ and of souls, her whole career of self-denying labor so fitly closed, "this that she hath done, shall be told for a memorial of her."

Miss Mary Coombs Greenleaf was born in Newbury, on the 31st day of January, in the year 1800 ; and was the daughter of Ebenezer and Jane Greenleaf — the latter that Dorcas, that

"mother in Israel," who for half a century and till her own 87th year, exemplified among us the faith and good deeds of primitive times. Sitting at that mother's feet, with almost the reverence of Mary at the feet of Jesus, through all her formative and subsequent years; imbibing from bible and catechism and daily converse, that accurate knowledge of divine truth for which she was conspicuous among us; witnessing that prayerfulness, beholding that Christian zeal, listening to and often the executive of those plans of benevolence, which were the warp and woof of that mother's life — and enduring in common with her much domestic trial — under such influences did her character bud, and grow, and ripen to womanly and Christian maturity. Mary was a "good girl" at school — even then did her schoolmates, as several of them have told me, sometimes pleasantly envy her cheerfulness, industry and good-natured kindness. But as this was a covenant family, whose legend for generations is among the saints — the names of Philip and William Coombs, her maternal grandfather and great grandfather, having come down even to us, as those of most godly men — and she a covenant child, elect before the dawn of life; it was the Lord's good purpose to enamel her native excellence with yet rarer hues of beauty. It pleased him, therefore, at about the age of twenty, to make her hopefully a child of his grace. On the 9th of December, 1820, she commenced her life-long communion with this church. Through what deep convictions of sin she passed to the heavenly gate, I need but intimate. 'Twas by the common path, and Mary, with all her goodness, found herself a hopeless captive under the law. But as she one evening entered the weekly lecture, during this period of mental distress — Dr. Dana, her uncle and pastor, then in the last year of his ministry here, was reading the hymn, "There is a fountain filled with blood;" and had reached the lines,

> "Redeeming love has been my theme,
> And shall be till I die."

They touched and thrilled an humbled, melting heart. The key-note of a new life seemed to have struck; through which, in repetitions sweet and solemn ran, these inspiring words,

> "Redeeming love has been my theme,
> And shall be till I die."

And now, entering heart and hand into her mother's plans for the good of others; with an activity that was tireless, and an executive power to accomplish in amount what few could; in manifold labors of love her days were consumed. She adopted her mother's useful practice of addressing notes of Christian solicitude and counsel to her Christian and impenitent relatives and friends. For some years she conducted an infant school. She, also, became a teacher in the Mission Sabbath School in a destitute district of the town; and by her energy and tact maintained it for years, notwithstanding many discouragements within the school and at times opposition and rudeness from without. She was, likewise, a faithful and efficient tract distributor; not simply leaving the tract at the door, but entering the humblest dwelling, befriending the poor—sometimes praying with them when it seemed proper—and commending by precept and instruction the light of life, as that which was needful to their comfort amid the vicissitudes of time, but especially in the hour of death and to save the soul. Besides these employments, the services she rendered in the church, where she never declined or neglected a duty, were many and various. Here, too, was she indefatigable and invaluable; as a teacher in the Sabbath School; as one of the collectors for numerous purposes of benevolence; as a coadjutor of the ministry; as one who was always present, and while there truly engaged, at the female prayer meetings; punctual and diligent at the "circles" of charity. And all this, which but faintly represents her usefulness, was done amid constant and pressing domestic cares, that another would have thought enough to oc-

cupy all the time and exhaust all the bodily and mental energies. Nor did she suffer these numerous engagements to interrupt her habits of private devotion or her mental and more thorough spiritual culture. This woman, whose labors were so abundant, whose whole time so occupied, communed more than the most of Christians with God in private; settled every question of duty on her knees; refreshed her energies, and drew her supplies, of all kinds, immediately from the fountain. In trouble or perplexity, when her religious affections were languid no less than when they were ardent, her unfailing resort was God. In this respect, as in relation to the whole matter of Christian culture and the diligent use of means, she followed closely the example of her pious mother. And thus not only did she become a steadfast and a very intelligent Christian herself, well read and experienced in the things of the kingdom; but she was able to guide and instruct others, who leaned affectionately upon her counsel and walked by her light. Her letters, her example, her skilful use of the word of God, and of her other religious reading, made them more prayerful, quickened their faith, upheld them in despondency, and contributed to their steadfastness. The influence of one Christian upon another, how great and blessed may it not become, when mind and heart are devoted to the work! And is it not always reciprocal: in the effort to profit another, shall we not profit ourselves? Such was often Miss Greenleaf's experience. "I felt a desire to comfort you, dead as I was myself," she writes to a desponding friend with whom she had kneeled in prayer; "and in the effort to benefit you, I was comforted myself."

But I must pass to the crowning act of her laborious and Christian life. In 1851, her mother — to whom in her old age, deaf, suffering and almost totally blind, Miss Greenleaf had devoted herself with tender assiduity — died. And although it was an undertaking for which she had no previous experience; yet with some occasional assistance, she wrote her pub-

lished memoir ;* a volume since thought worthy to be incorporated among the publications of the Sabbath School Society. The filial tribute rendered, a long cherished wish now again recurred to her mind. In the earlier years of her Christian life, she had solemnly consecrated herself to the Missionary work. Imperious filial duty, however, had for 34 years interfered with the accomplishment of her purpose. But being now left free to follow out the promptings of her heart, the question returned with new force — could she not in that work employ herself more *directly* for the spiritual welfare of others than here she seemed able, and on the whole do more good? Female helpers for the Indian missions were greatly needed and earnestly called for. Ought she to remain here, amidst a luxury of religious privileges, where already there were so many laborers — or should she not allow the constraining love of Christ, even at her age, to bear her away from these privileges, to separate her even from the church she so loved and with which she had expected to live and die ; if, perchance, some Indian child or adult might by her be directed to the Saviour, and thus some lost soul be saved and greater glory redound to his blessed name? These were the questions she pondered deeply in her own breast, and at length proposed to me.

As more fully exhibiting her views upon the subject, I will quote the abstract she made of reasons for entering the missionary service — "1st, the early consecration of myself to this work in secret silence of the mind ; "thy vows are upon me, O God" — "pay that thou hast vowed" — 2nd, my strong constitution, good health, and willingness to labor in any way whereby the cause of Christ may be promoted — 3rd, greater usefulness ; the most of my time being taken up with secular concerns incumbent for my livelihood, with no prospect of being free from this necessity — 4th, no family ties to sunder by

* In a second edition she included a memoir of her brother, Rev. William C. Greenleaf, a Home Missionary of kindred spirit, who died at the West in 1851.

going away — 5th, in a church of over 350 members, should not several give themselves to missionary labors ; especially those who have not wealth to bestow ? — 6th, a greater interest in missions might be awakened in the church, and others, perhaps, be induced to go — 7th, my friends in other places might have their interest in missions increased — 8th, encouragements ; the command of Christ, "go ye into all the world" &c ; the promise 1 Cor. 1 : 27—29, "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," &c ; "as thy day is, so shall thy strength be." Moreover, the engagement to stay is but for three years, should it seem desirable to return." But on the other hand were some grave objections, which she thus states — 1st, my advanced age ; my health might fail in another climate — 2nd, the interests of the church at home may suffer. My position here is useful, and this year in particular there are special duties to be performed. The low standard of piety among us seems, also, to require the presence and influence of those who entered the church, in a day when there was less worldliness and more spirituality ; and I may be rushing out of the sphere where Providence has placed me. It was here my sainted mother lived and labored ; and I may tread in her steps, if grace be earnestly sought — 3rd, am I sufficiently qualified for missionary labor and this to me untried sphere ? — 4th, the opposition of some friends."

Having found, however, by a visit to New York, that her age was no disadvantage for the sphere of labor to which she was especially looking, and that the climate was not unsuited to her — the other objections were overborne by the strong drawings of her godly desires ; and under the feeling of Christian duty as indicated by providence and grace, she determined to make the sacrifice. "Of course (she wrote to a friend,) to part with my beloved pastor and the church and my many dear friends will give me pain ; but if the love of Christ constrains me, he will be near to comfort, support and bless. I go, perhaps,

to sickness and death — perhaps to a few years of service among the injured aborigines; but confidently relying on the divine promises, and remembering that the separations of life are very short, and that if we meet at the close of our pilgrimage in our Father's house above, it will be well forever."

Such were her feelings and views. And thus *at the age of fifty-six*; long after the period when, with most, the shadows have turned upon the dial of active life, and when they begin to think of repose from toil; did she gird herself for new and more arduous duties, and go forth, a missionary, to the regions of the setting sun. Her destination was Wapanucka, in the Chickasaw nation; where as a teacher in the large Female Seminary for Indian children, there established and sustained by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, she was henceforth to labor.

What affectionate sorrow attended her departure, I need but recall. Few, if any, had more friends or friends more warmly attached; to some it seemed as if they or the church could scarcely do without her; while all feared they should "see her face no more." She herself, also, anticipated that she might never return, and felt the parting deeply; yet with that admirable and firm trust in God which characterized her, committing the future entirely to Him, it was with a cheerful mind and a calm demeanor, that she left the scenes of her life — as it proved, forever.

Of her labors at Wapanucka, I cannot speak with any minuteness of detail. Upwards of thirty of the pupils were under her immediate supervision. Their temporal welfare occupied her time and attention, as well as their spiritual. And from the thoughtless imprudence of these children of the forest, to whom she became deeply attached, sickness frequently prevailed among them, and her cares were thus greatly increased. But however arduous and exhausting the toil it was cheerfully endured, by one who spared not herself where the Master was

to be served and good done. And thus did she win the love of her charge; while her character and worth grew daily in the appreciation of her fellow laborers. At length dysentery — although a disorder of not frequent occurrence there — commenced its ravages in the school; and soon attacked herself, while like a ministering angel she watched at the bedside of her pupils. Self-forgetful as usual, nay neglectful of what her own health and safety required, she stood for days "at the gate of the valley called death, to cheer and stay up the hearts of the trembling lambs; and then went in peacefully, happily, herself."

Her death took place at the interval of but one year from the time of her departure — on the 26th of June, 1857, at midday. "Her sun is gone down while it was yet day," said the prophet of old. And such was the lament of many, when her death was announced among us. But it went not down, it but crossed the meridian — to shine with more glorious effulgence in the heaven of heavens forever and ever.

From this outline of the life of our departed friend and sister, I will now pass to some inferences which both the narrative and the text suggest; and in which her personal characteristics, and her elevated piety will be more fully disclosed. Her form and face we shall, indeed, behold no more, her kindly voice we shall no more hear. Yet a living light remains from her holy example; such specimens of christian character and devotion are furnished for our advantage and the good of the church; and it is becoming we should recall that we may profit by them.

I. I remark that this and every such life and example, become striking memorials of the POWER OF DIVINE GRACE to ennoble the character, to give greater dignity and worth to the most exalted, and to qualify even the feeblest instrument for honorable service. The natural is, I know, the basis of the spiritual

in the kingdom of God; and it must obviously and largely manifest the true course of each one's mission in the world. God never delights in incongruities; but preserves a beautiful proportion and harmony in all his acts, and a fitness in his chosen instruments. As some voices are sweeter, more expressive, or more powerful than others; as some musical instruments from richness of tone, or compass and variety, are more suitable than others to the purposes of the composer; so is there a difference in the native endowments of men; which God regards, and on account of which he selects them; as he selected his prophets of old, each for a purpose to which nature had adapted him. They spake, indeed, by inspiration — "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"; but the language and the vision differed, according as it came from the lips of an Isaiah, a Jeremiah, an Ezekiel or a Daniel. It was our Saviour's divinity on the one hand, and on the other his perfect manhood, that fitted him to be the Saviour of the world. So when a missionary is needed to carry the gospel among Jews and Gentiles, to Athens and to Rome, Saul of Tarsus, though exceedingly mad against the Christians, is the one selected; because in him were the natural qualities required for this service; qualities which grace only refined and directed aright. The Spirit may find its "chosen vessel" to the human eye, indeed, apparently unfit. But God seeth not as man seeth; and those characteristics which may seem in a measure to disqualify, are often, when sanctified and combined with the graces of the Spirit, the very powers most appropriate and needful to the work in view. So, too, the course of divine training to which an individual has been subjected, may be deemed by us inappropriate — as in the case of Saul the Pharisee — yet may that very training, when the Spirit operates effectual, tend to make the Christian more eminent and useful.

Miss Greenleaf had much natural amiability of disposition, clear apprehensions, a large share of quiet energy, and what

may, perhaps, be termed a religious spirit; the latter, can we question it, a legacy, under the Covenant of God, from a pious ancestry. But 'twas grace, who may doubt it, that made her what she was? In her case, it is true, no striking change was visible — such as filled the disciples with joy at the conversion of Paul — when at the age of twenty, she experienced the Spirit's renewing influences, professed her faith in Christ and united in communion with this church. The God of Covenant, in whose book all her "members were written, when as yet there was none of them," and whose purposes towards her, and towards others by her means, were kind, and made long before her existence commenced — had held her in his eye; had selected her forefathers from the most godly of the church; had given her that mother; had shaped the vicissitudes of her early days; had formed in her a character that was admirable; before he baptized her with the Holy Ghost. Yet, after all, without that baptism what would she have been? Her public education was limited, having ended with her fourteenth year. But divine grace infused into her heart a high relish for the Bible, of which she became a prayerful and studious pupil. And she afforded another illustration of what we are often led to remark — the power of the Bible over a mind imbued with its spirit, to elevate the taste and even to form a correct and vigorous style of thought and composition. For from that "well of English undefiled"; from Watts and Doddridge and others of the purest and best religious writers, of that class whose works at that period were found in most pious families and formed a large part of their reading; she not only drew knowledge, but acquired a natural turn of thought and an easy and happy mode of expression. She had much native philanthropy, of which her whole life is the indisputable evidence. But grace it was, that in love to God and desire to glorify him by doing good, gave the animating motive, shaped all its courses, and made her plentiful in good words and works. She was a lone woman,

untitled, without riches, and there was nought else in her circumstances or even her character, to obtain for her a wide influence — an influence above others her equals or superiors in most respects — save her religion, the grace of God that was within her. Though by temperament energetic, she was self-distrustful. She would, doubtless, have been useful and active in her sphere, without renewing grace, but not so useful nor so prominent nor so much respected. For religion filled her with faith; with the love of Christ and of souls; and these made her brave to encounter, ardent to accomplish, and in shrinking weakness strong. Her faith was, indeed, a noble grace — I have known few with whom it was so constant a principle, in whom a fountain of so steady a flow. It was strong, simple, buoyant, fearless, serene. To all fears of bodily harm by day or night, to all timidity, she was a stranger; for her trust in God was implicit. And as to her soul's welfare, here is her own confession of faith: — "You ask me" — she writes from Wapanucka to a friend — "to speak of my religious experience. I am not fond of this; but I can do so in few words. 'In me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing' —but my hope is in Christ. I think I have some daily evidence of love to him; and I know this would not be, had he not first loved me — and knowing his unchangeableness, I trust him for grace to endure to the end; and to save me at last, not for my righteousness, but of his own great mercy. And fully believing that 'a soul redeemed demands a life of praise,' I desire to do and to suffer all his will, and in that I find my happiness. Neither you nor I, need distress ourselves about passing 'the river that has no bridge'; knowing that whom 'Christ loves, he loves to the end' — and he will be particularly near in the hour of his people's extremity."

In tracing up Miss Greenleaf's influence and christian graces of character, then, to their source; in making her thus publicly an illustration of the power of divine grace when truly received

into the heart and nurtured there — for the glory of God and your profiting in the lessons of piety, my hearers — let me not be considered by any as presenting a partial, a sectarian view. I know the power of other agencies, of many a worldly impulse, over character and conduct — I know what nature and the training of Providence may do; what they had done for her. But really to beautify and adorn, to transform the natural into the spiritual, to subvert selfishness where it has been manifest, to implant true disinterested love to our fellows, to fill with the mind that was in Christ Jesus, and give the noblest impulse to the soul — to temper force with meekness and love, and cast over the embodied whole the halo of christian sanctity and self-denial: as she and thousands more of every race and clime have proved: there is nothing like, nothing but the gospel of the grace of God. Her memorial is, that she was a christian; her character was not the growth of mere natural principles and affections, she was a trophy of divine power. God, who had fixed his love upon her, and in time called her into his kingdom, had given her the spirit of his children; it was this spirit that formed her entire spirit, that prompted to those acts of self-denial and active usefulness that marked her daily life, and finally led her cheerfully to give herself a sacrifice to the Missionary cause.

II. I remark that what she has done becomes a "memorial" of her PERSONAL WORTH IN THE WORLD. We cannot always judge of the real worth of individuals in the world by the high offices and honorable places they may fill. The Pharisees of our Saviour's time occupied "the chief seats in the synagogues," and were high in popular estimation for sanctity; yet were they, with few exceptions, but "whited sepulchres." While in the house of Simon the leper, there was a woman, drawn thither by love to the Master — her name till then, it may be, unknown save within the narrow limits and to the humble residents of Bethany — who yet, by one act of unstudied

goodness, revealed a depth of tender sensibility, a wealth of Christian affection, a worth of character, which the Saviour has himself embalmed with the encomiums of his lips; thus securing for her honorable mention "in the whole world." There are deeds done by humble women "not a few," in the quiet of daily life, in the dwellings of the poor; which display more true goodness and are of more real value, than many of those for which statesmen are lauded and princes transmitted to posterity. But few know them; history does not record them; and the Saviour reserves his commendation for the revealing day. In Miss Greenleaf's case, however, whose Christian labors were more public and so long continued, we can more readily estimate her worth — though we have come to realize it, perhaps, only by her loss.

How few, my friends, do we find even among the disciples of Christ who, if competent, are ready to do what she did! How she stands out in the comparison, beyond multitudes of much greater capacity and more abundant means! We are mostly content — is it not so — to walk in the common path, to float with the current? While she adopted as a maxim the saying of Dr. Griffin, that we are not to be "carried as dead logs to heaven;" and felt that there was work to be done. And not alone in active Christian labors did she excel others. Out of her limited means she gave for charitable purposes almost the 'widow's mite"; and sometimes, I think, not even that was witheld. She has made gifts to the objects of this church, which in her circumstances were noble; and even till her death continued her usual benefactions.

One more particular let me note. In her tongue was the law of Christian kindness; nor did she neglect, when duty required it, the kindness from which we all so timidly shrink — the "faithful wounds of a friend." I would not eulogize beyond her measure; I know that sometimes her manner, her directness, tinged even her kindness with a shadow. Yet in such instances it was

manifest that no malice or uncharitableness moved her tongue; that the word that may have caused a momentary pain, was after all the result of pure sincerity; that a sense of duty alone controlled; and they who felt the temporary grievance, upon reflection paid respect to the intention and could easily and cordially forgive. There are those who feel that her candor and faithfulness were blessed to them; and who praise and love her memory for it.

And thus did she go through the world; always the same, cheerful, devout, faithful, diligent, kind. We recall her image: we remember her quick and busy step: we seem almost to see again her lively and intelligent countenance: we have before us fresh in recollection her routine of daily duties in the Master's cause, and all her usefulness; and we feel that the church has lost one who exemplified what she professed — and whose worth to it and to the world, to the poor, the tempted, the erring, was great. This, also, is her "memorial." She, at least, "hath done what she could."

III. Her example shall be for a memorial of the importance and excellence of the MISSIONARY WORK. On this point it is peculiarly appropriate to speak, for to this work Miss Greenleaf, in one sense, devoted her days. She was really much of a missionary while at home among us. But to the proper missionary work her mind and heart, as I have said, had been early given; and for it, at length, she left attached friends, her home usefulness, church privileges which were peculiarly dear to her, and the graves of her family—and at fifty-six years of age went forth and died on the field of her chosen labor. Did she do right to go? Will the cause and motive justify her act? I say unhesitatingly, yes: fully so.

Now I lay no special stress, in this connection, upon the tidings we have received that eleven conversions have occurred in her Indian school during the last year; while through her instrumentality others have been quickened and revived. The

blessing in its fullness, was not, perhaps, for her alone, but for all those faithful teachers. Yet who can compute the worth of one of those souls: or tell what one and another may yet do in the missionary work among their own people: or what, in this view, will be the consequences of Miss Greenleaf's labors there? Does not this precious ingathering seem itself like a voice of approval from heaven? Nor need I dwell upon a picture, which Christian philanthropy has often drawn before. It is the Indian. See him with his proud head bowed, see him with his spirit sad and broken, see him with slow and reluctant movements, retreating step by step before the fate that pursues him, and vanishing at length in the border wilderness! The white man still crowds relentlessly upon his possessions; brings to his hut the poison "fire water;" makes him a madman and a sot; that he may the more quickly despoil him of his last resting-place, and blot his race from the land whose broad expanse his ancestors but lately claimed as all their own! This is his accredited story, and a true and piteous tale it is. And if a good woman, whose heart God has touched with sympathy for the poor outcast, goes when the call for help is made, to try and save a straggler or a child of his race: if she thinks it an object worth the sacrifice, shall we object? I put it thus upon the lowest ground; not the call of imperative Christian duty, but the dictate of a tender humanity. But if she believe that all are wanderers from God, a lost race without the renovating truth of the gospel; and breaks all other ties to bear it to them, that some may be saved: shall we dare object, and thus betray, it may be our own pusillanimity, or what is even worse, our selfishness and want of faith in the gospel or love for souls?

You will recall the incidents preceding our text; how the disciples "had indignation, saying, to what purpose is this waste; for it might have been sold for much and given to the *poor*." The remark sprang from dislike to the spirit of generosity that woman displayed, and not from any regard to the poor, as the

Saviour, who saw their hearts, well knew ; and it foreshadowed their subsequent defection from himself. That spirit led them to deny the Lord in the season of his peril. For as they had not love enough for him, to approve the beauty of her act; so neither, when the time of trial came, had they enough to encounter danger with him. Yet how common the same objection to Missions. Why this waste of money? Why this waste of valuable lives — lives thus withdrawn from more important, more appropriate spheres?

I have already said that Christian love is not worldly wise ; but not thus would I leave the matter : not so, to appearance even, would I impugn the heroic devotion of our departed missionary friend. There is something better even than life—a single soul—the world cannot repay the loss! Many temporal ends will demand and justify the loss of life. Take, my hearers, the case of human warfare. Life is valuable ; in many private, and in many public relations it is valuable ; and the more gifted, enterprising, and useful the individual, the more precious his continuance in his proper sphere. But do the patriotic and high-minded think of this, when their country is in danger, and a battle or their death may save it? Yet what are dynasties or terrene interests, even the highest, to the interests of Christ's kingdom—that peaceful dominion which is not of this transitory world, whose warfare is not "with garments rolled in blood," but waged by the prayers and the piety and the example of such as our now sainted friend? What is country, to the regeneration of souls from vice and sin and death eternal? Life *is* valuable, considered in relation to this world merely—and Christianity makes it infinitely more so ; for it connects the fleeting days of every son of mortality here with endless being. And to us a life like her's—so active in goodness, so likely to be enriched with blessed fruits—was a treasure. But, my hearers, there are times when the best, the jewelled souls of richest value—yea, when retiring women—

must step forth to the post of duty, though they die. They *must* go where trials are to be met, and death is imminent and ghastly; there like ministering angels to exercise woman's tenderness or their Christian fortitude for others' good; and even to die, leaving an example that shall live and preach and gather others to like service, and so ennoble Christian principle and bless the world. And when such feel the call of duty, or are constrained by the love of Christ, shall we interpose and object—above all shall we heartlessly say, "why this waste?" And so our friend must go. Her call God himself indicated when, after having trained and qualified her by years of preparatory toil and self-sacrifice, he brought the "Macedonian cry" to her ears, and made her heart's altar fires burn brightly with love to Christ and to souls. She died. But she had done her work: a good work indeed: more, perhaps, than many of us shall do though we live long: and she was satisfied to die. She would indeed, she said, have wished to live, had it pleased God; but she wished it for those "dear girls," her pupils, and to continue at her missionary work. And I claim it as all redounding to the praise of missions, that they have engrossed the sanctified affections and carried to a higher intensity the glowing zeal of so many such Christians—have furnished the church and the world with such examples of primitive self-denial and love—have thus borne blessed fruits, which are *worth many lives.*

Let us, my brethren in Christ, take our tone of thought from such, as examples of the true spirit of the gospel—let this that our latest and now lamented missionary has done, and which is the more impressive in its teachings because of her advanced age, lead us to more elevated views of our heavenly vocation—and then will have been accomplished another end, in the hope of which she went forth from among us, and for the sake of which she counted not her "life dear unto herself." To do as she did, and as other missionaries of

the Cross have done — to break away from home and comforts and privileges—may indeed require an unusual and even an extraordinary spirit of self-denial and devotion to the master. But when He left heaven for a missionary's life on earth, to be closed by the Cross—when he said to his disciples, "he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me;" did he not in reality announce, that "the extraordinary is the *rule* in the kingdomof God?" And in a day when the spirit of worldliness has so extensively invaded the church, how deeply is she indebted to missions, and to her devoted missionaries, for recalling the host to the standard of duty—and for that devotion to the glory of Zion and her King, which hesitates not at the sacrifice of life itself! Think not, then, my sorrowing friends, it had been better, wiser, had she whom you mourn continued here, ministering to the poor, and laboring with the rest of you—a numerous band and equal to the field—in this vineyard of the Lord. Had she in such labors died at home, you would not have repined—and should we now, when "this that she hath done" so honors the Saviour, and is her own noblest "memorial?"

IV. Our text suggests another appropriate, (and the closing) thought. "This—shall be told." It shall not soon be forgotten. It is in itself so excellent and almost so divine a thing, that it shall be durable. After ages shall hear of it. There shall be a "memorial" of it; so that the lips of many shall speak of it and the hearts of many shall be touched and profited by it. It shall be held for a beautiful example of humility and self-denial and gratitude that shall teach and impress others. Little did that adoring penitent who poured her precious ointment on Jesus' head imagine, that she was connecting herself with the gospel; and that her slight act of regard should be told through all time, "in all the world" wheresoever that gospel should be preached. That, indeed, was far from her thought or motive. Yet we see that no service done to honor Christ, shall be without

its reward. After the lapse of 1800 years we read the simple story—it is read now in the many tongues into which the Bible has been translated in all parts of the globe—and it will continue to be spoken of while time shall last.

In measure, the story of our departed friend shall, also, "be told." It will not be graven upon the marble cenotaph, which adorns our sanctuary, to be perpetuated with Whitefield's name and labors—and over the place of her burial at Wapanucka, neither stone nor marble nor inscription may tell so much even as the name and age of the one who lies there—but better than that, more valuable "memorial," it shall be spoken of, shall pass from heart to heart and mouth to mouth; and thus be perpetuated and become a blessing. Among her friends who yet remain below; in the gatherings of prayer; in the church she loved and adorned by her consistent life; in the circles of benevolence; among her pupils of the Sabbath school, who will live after her; at the mission station, and among the race for whom she died; we may believe it will be so. You will not forget her, my friends, forget that faithful counsellor, that bright example, that moving light of piety, it was your privilege in degenerate days to have seen and known, and by whose cheering light you have often been comforted and guided! When you meet, you will say "how we miss her!" When gainsayers are scornful, you will point to her holy consecration and hopeful death, and they will be dumb. Yes, I cannot but think that when years have passed away, her image will yet be fresh, her name and virtues linger upon the lips of many in this place. In death itself, perhaps, when to strengthen your soul amidst the swellings of Jordan, you think of those who have triumphantly passed that way before, her example will rise to your thoughts as that of a Christian indeed; who lived and died in the faith and had the patience and obtained the victory of the saints. You, also, my friends, to whom in Christian love she often spoke of your souls and of the way of life, and of a

threatening judgement, will not forget her! I hope, I pray the words may yet work thoughtfulness and conviction in your minds, and lead you to the Saviour — Oh that it may thus be with many here for whom she prayed. But they will not be lost; they will be repeated at the judgement, to her praise, perhaps to your dismay!

At her last field of labor, too, she shall be spoken of. Twenty years hence, the broken wilderness will be a peopled neighborhood. Her pupils will have grown to maturity, and have formed their relations in life. In view of this, did she herself feel the importance of effort for their education and Christianization. And her efforts will not be lost nor forgotten. Jane Greenleaf the Indian child, her mother's namesake and her own fond companion, cannot surely forget, will speak of her— will often recall the kind, Christian woman who, when she was a heathen girl, left home and comfort and kindred, and came and prayed and died for her. Others, for whom with cheerful diligence she performed her tender task, will remember her; and so will her fellow laborers in the same precious work. And thus will her influence run on, when of us, it may be, with wealth or eminence, with far more apparently, to make us known, beyond the formal epitaph no record shall remain. The "memorial" of this humble Christian woman shall live embalmed in affectionate hearts, long after the grave shall have dominion over her. Oh! there is no death to true, Christian goodness; 'tis in its nature immortal. In heaven itself, where the Saviour will always greet his chosen with his approving smile; among the redeemed who, we believe, recount to the praise of God the achievements of his grace, and throughout eternity—"shall this, also, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."

And thus, dear friend, we are content it should be. Oh! we have thought almost with repining, of her short career in that service for which she longed, and on which she seemed to

enter only to die. And we have been almost tempted to murmur, "were there no graves" here, that thou didst go forth from us and from the graves of many generations of sainted ancestors, to lay thy bones among the inhabitants of the wilderness ? Was there not here enough to do, that thou didst take this distant charge ? But it was the love of Christ constrained thee ; and therefore we will not deplore thee. Thy "memorial" is made ; thou art resting from thy labors ; thou art with Christ forever. And for thy body, we are content with its grave—there beside the limestone dwelling, the scene of its latest toils—there by the prairie's verge, with Indian girls to strew prairie flowers upon it, and to water it with their tears—there where the martins have their home and the golden robin sings—there where the golden coreopses bloom, and passion flowers, fit emblems of devotion like them. There shall it lie undisturbed—where thy companions and pupils laid it—to "sleep the years away" till the Saviour shall come, and gather it, and fashion it "like unto his glorious body." We leave thine honored dust in hope—while for ourselves we will ponder and remember thy Christian life and tranquil death—we will speak often in memorial of thee—and pray that to all, thy prayers, thy life and death, may be sanctified ; that we may learn to follow thy faith up to the land of vision and of bliss.

Oh when, my Christian friends, shall there be another from the ranks of this church, to exemplify so much piety — upon whom the mantle of her devotion may be said to have manifestly fallen ? Thanks be to divine grace, the time has never yet come, when the desponding lament was quite true that the "godly ceaseth,"— when in this ancient church with its long line of sainted worthies, the ransomed of a century, the Lord has not had some servant of distinguished zeal, and the church an example of exalted faith. But how, I ask with solicitude, is it now — are the young growing to the stature of their spiritual predecessors — is the glory to depart — are there not again to be Christians here like

unto those of the past ? I imagine them congregated upon the heavenly heights, and looking anxiously down upon us—"a great cloud of witnesses"—to see the race we run, and to observe the welfare of the Zion they loved. I detect their venerable forms, as each bends forward with eager interest to behold ;—Parsons is there, and Cross, the gatherers and upbuilders of the fold ; and many a later saint, and she we mourn—not the last indeed, but in her holy yearnings not the least. And what shall they behold ; when they thus come forth from the inner courts of bliss, all, all robed in light—like the stars which by night gather in the front of heaven—to survey this lower scene ? My brethren, what shall they behold—what report carry back to the precincts of the throne ? In the future shall there be here but dwarfs in piety—or rather, shall we not now gird up anew the loins of our minds ; and encouraged, incited, won by their example, press forward with fresh vigor and more strenuous zeal, to the praise of God's grace, and the glory of our Redeemer ?